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JUAN BANDINI A HUMAN PERSPECTIVE

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Juan Bandini's personal letters dating from 1841 to 1859 to his son-in-law Abel Stearns found in the Huntington Library are a magnificent source of historic information, but they are more than that. They let us perceive the every-day life, personality, and feelings of Juan Bandini, an important figure in the history of San Diego.

Bandini had a close relationship with his daughters and sons and he was a devoted husband. Every time he signed his letters he would say: "give all my love to my daughters." Stearns married Bandini's daughter Arcadia and Juan sent another daughter, Ysidora, to live with them to keep her sister company. He would always say to Stearns that he missed them and that he wished he could go visit them in Los Angeles. Apparently he wasn't able to go very

often because he had to manage his properties, take care of Stearns' properties, and for health reasons as well.

Several letters reveal that Bandini was always thinking of the well-being of his family. He would send items that Stearns had requested to Los Angeles and sometimes Bandini would add little packets containing presents for his daughters. At the end of one letter he told Stearns: "please don't forget to give Ysidorita the packet that contains white cotton cloth for her to make some blouses and to give Arcadia the little ring that accompanies the cloth." He would ask to be sent golden thimbles, combs and needles for his daughters and wife. In one letter Bandini asked Stearns:

I am begging you to tell Ysidorita to change the clothes of her brothers, to mend them so they are not raggedy, to arise early and clean her room and the room of her sister, to make the coffee, to sweep early, and to dust, for this exercise is good for the health and is beneficial to the interest and to the good education as well.

One particularly funny letter talks about the way Bandini would worry about his daughter Arcadia. The Estudillo ladies (who were Arcadia's aunts) were going to pay a visit to Stearns and Arcadia in Los Angeles, but Bandini wanted to warn Stearns about these ladies, although very honorable and with an irreproachable conduct, they were very fond of presents. Bandini said they would do anything possible to persuade Arcadia to give them things they liked in her house as presents, and because Arcadia is very kind she would not be able to refuse, so Bandini says to avoid this visit at all cost to save Arcadia's belongings and to teach her "economy".

A few other letters tell us that Bandini was also worried about the education of his sons. He sent his son Juanito, to Stearns to take his first reading lessons and Bandini thanked Stearns for taking care of the education of his sons.

